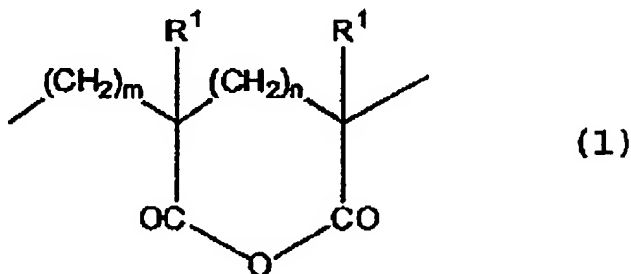


In the Claims:

Amend Claims 1-3, 6-8, 11, 16 and 17. Cancel Claims 12-15, 18-22 and 26-29. Add Claim 30. The changes in the claim are shown with ~~strike throughs~~ or double brackets [] for deleted matter and underlining for added matter. A complete listing of the claims with proper identifiers follows.

1. (Currently Amended) An acrylic block copolymer (A) comprising a methacrylic polymer block (a) and an acrylic polymer block (b), wherein at least one of the polymer blocks contains, in its main chain, at least one acid anhydride group (c) represented by formula (1):



(wherein in which R¹'s each represent hydrogen or a methyl group and may be the same or different, n represents an integer of 0 to 3, and m represents an integer of 0 or 1),

wherein the acrylic ~~black~~block copolymer contains 0.1% by weight to 99.9% by weight of the acid anhydride group (c), wherein the number-average molecular weight of the acrylic block copolymer is 30,000 to 500,000,

wherein the ratio (M_w/M_n) of the weight average molecular weight (M_w) to the number-average molecular weight (M_n) according to gel permeation chromatographic measurement is 1 to 1.8, and [.]

wherein the acrylic polymer block (b) comprises n-butyl acrylate, ethyl acrylate, and 2-methoxyethyl acrylate.

2. (Currently Amended) The acrylic block copolymer according to Claim 1 or Claim 30, containing 0.1% by weight to 50% by weight of a carboxyl group (d).

3. (Currently Amended) The acrylic block copolymer according to Claim 1 or Claim 30, wherein the acrylic block copolymer is at least one type selected from the group consisting of $(a-b)_n$, $b-(a-b)_n$, and $(a-b)_n-a$.

4.-5. (Cancelled)

6. (Currently Amended) The acrylic block copolymer according to Claim 1 or Claim 30, comprising 5% by weight to 80% by weight of the methacrylic polymer block (a) and 95% by weight to 20% by weight of the acrylic polymer block (b).

7. (Currently Amended) The acrylic block copolymer according to Claim 1 or Claim 30, wherein the methacrylic polymer block (a) contains the acid anhydride group (c).

8. (Currently Amended) The acrylic block copolymer according to Claim 1 or Claim 30, wherein the acrylic polymer block (b) contains the acid anhydride group (c).

9.-10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) The acrylic block copolymer according to Claim 1 or Claim 30, wherein the carboxyl group (d) is contained in the block containing the acid anhydride group (c).

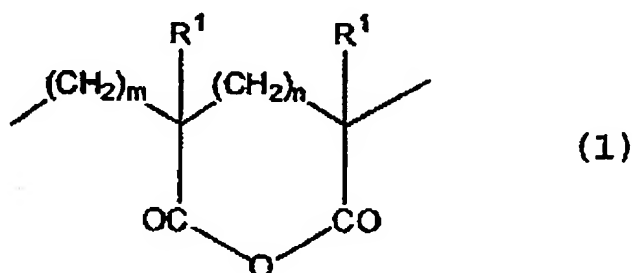
12.-15. (Cancelled)

16. (Currently Amended) The acrylic block copolymer according to Claim 1 or Claim 30, containing a carboxyl group (e) produced in its side chains by hydrolytic ring opening of the acid anhydride group.

17. (Currently Amended) The acrylic block copolymer according to Claim 1 or Claim 30, wherein the acrylic block copolymer is produced by atom transfer radical polymerization.

18.-29. (Cancelled)

30. (New) An acrylic block copolymer (A) comprising a methacrylic polymer block (a) and an acrylic polymer block (b), wherein at least one of the polymer blocks contains, in its main chain, at least one acid anhydride group (c) represented by formula (1):



(in which R¹'s each represent hydrogen or a methyl group and may be the same or different, n represents an integer of 0 to 3, and m represents an integer of 0 or 1),

wherein the acrylic ~~block~~ block copolymer contains 0.1% by weight to 99.9% by weight of the acid anhydride group (c), wherein the number-average molecular weight of the acrylic block copolymer is 30,000 to 500,000,

wherein the ratio (M_w/M_n) of the weight average molecular weight (M_w) to the number-average molecular weight (M_n) according to gel permeation chromatographic measurement is 1 to 1.8, and

wherein the acrylic polymer block (b) comprises n-butyl acrylate and 2-methoxyethyl acrylate.